SUMMARY OF NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Overview

There have been some significant changes the legislation covering Planning (applies from 27th March 2012), through a piece of legislation known as the National Planning Policy Framework. It is a 65 page document, which can be viewed via the URL / link below.


I'll confess to knowing little about this, but having read the document and some associated commentary I have tried to provide a summary below drawing on the relevant parts for smaller communities such as Plumpton. I imagine Paul and Steve can probably give further insight as this is a complex area!

What has changed?

- The headline is that there is now a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved, and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. It is highly desirable that local planning authorities should have an up-to-date plan in place. (in the case of LDC, this is Local Plan and once adopted the Core Strategy).
- Most of the existing Planning Policy Statements (PPS) have been abolished and replaced by 12 'core' planning principles (see Annex).
- It is driven by the government's localism and economic growth agendas.
- It stresses the importance of the 'green belt' and that previously developed land and empty buildings should be brought back into active use; often referred to as a 'brownfield first' approach. With Class Use Orders, local authorities should normally approve applications to change from commercial to residential use unless there are strong contrary economic reasons.
- The location and quantity of new housing stock is devolved to local authorities (i.e. LDC). However, they must identify sites capable of delivering a five-year supply of housing to meet their housing targets with a “buffer” of between 5%-20% pending their record in maintaining such stock in the past. Allowances can also be made for “windfall sites” where it can be suitably evidenced.
- The definition of affordable housing remains as in PPS3 and includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. Policies should reflect the requirement to meet the need for affordable housing on-site, unless off-site provision or financial contributions can be "robustly justified". Limited affordable housing is one of the few exceptions to "inappropriate" building in Green Belt.
 Annex: 12 Planning Principles

1. Be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency;

2. Not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;

3. Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;

4. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;

5. Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;

6. Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy);

7. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;

8. Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value;

9. Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);

10. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;

11. Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and

12. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.